CHAPTER XXIII THE THRESHOLD OF MONARCHY[1]

Bonaparte at Maturity — Ability and Opportunity — Personal Appearance—Mind and Manners — Personal Habits — The Man of France — The Consular Court — The First Consul's Cynicism —The Feud between Bonapartes and Beauharnais — Disuse of the Republican Calendar—The "Genius of Christianity."

BONAPARTE was now thirty-four. Thus far he had been not alone the tool of fate nor yet entirely the architect of his own fortunes; he had been both. In Corsica his immature powers had been thwarted by conditions beyond his control. During the Revolution he had caught at every straw which would spare his life and give him a living. Until his marriage he was a soldier of fortune, and fortune made it difficult, either by professional excellence or political scheming, to grasp any of her favors. Accordingly he went without them, suffering, erring, dreaming, philosophizing, observing, and gathering the experience which made him mature at the age when most men are still boys. The observer

1 Personal details are abundant land's recollections and in the in Antommarchi, Montholon, Las following books: Aubenas: Vie de Cases and Gourgaud; likewise in Josephine; Ducrest: M6moires sur the memoirs of the brothers Josephine; Bouilly: Mes re*capitu-Joseph and Lucien, of the ladies lations; Lamartine: Histoire de la Junot, de RSmusat, de Genlis, and Restauration; Lacretelle: Histoire Avrillon, of Barante, Barras, du Consulat; B6gin: Histoire de Bourrienne, Chaptal, Chateau- Napoleon, and Stenger: La So-briand, Constant, de Gerardin, cie'te' Francaise pendant le Con-Mallet du Pan, Meneval, Thie*- sulat. bault, and Rapp; in Lord Hoi-